

## VASCO M. TANNER — A DIVERSIFIED CAREER

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I consider it an honor to contribute some personal recollections as a former student of Professor Vasco M. Tanner. In spite of the lapse of a quarter of a century, my recall of his influence on students and his scientific devotion to research is clear. It is an honor to share his own pleasure and pride.

Cognizance of his name came prior to my academic days at Brigham Young University. Through conversations with my father, I learned interesting experiences of young Tanner as a member of a survey team.

At the University my greatest motivation in science was a course by Professor Tanner entitled "The History of Science." At that time he had attained public recognition in the field of zoology and entomology and was able to ascertain without prejudice, those facts of history that were of fundamental importance and to document the true origins of ideas. He also showed cause to respect the scientific method. His knowledgeable interjections brought out in living likeness the personalities of great scientists, and he demonstrated their widely varying dispositions and circumstances, while sharing a common interest in their search of truth. One of the delights of the course was his relating of experiences with his early colleagues, a group of great naturalists not likely to be assembled again in one zoology department. He persistently encouraged reading of great books, emphasizing that knowledge is power. He also taught many other subjects which added immeasurably to one's pleasure of living and gave one the feeling of a more intimate relationship with the flora and fauna and the physical features of Utah Valley and its environs.

In addition to being a great teacher, Professor Tanner developed significant natural history collections; while these collections had already reached the position of first importance before I entered the University, they continued to grow from year to year. His collections were the source material and inspiration for his research and publications. He will forever remain an example for his acumen to inspire funding authorities with the importance of acquiring scientific specimens and research material for graduate students and faculty.

To see Professor Tanner continually at the microscope studying the elytra of *Aracoschizus airmeti* or perhaps counting dorsal rays of *Knighthia copei* prompted the uninformed to believe that his interests and knowledge of life did not extend beyond the specimen; however, second thoughts demonstrated that Dr. Tanner was a man whose varied and intellectual life was that of a truly creative thinker. Beyond the University sphere, he valiantly entered the controversial debates of conservation, preservation of natural resources, and poli-

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tics. When meeting with prominent people during his extensive travels, being widely read, he was able to discuss at length, both intelligently and logically, any topic.

A scrupulous honesty pervades both his private life and his scientific writing. The soundness of his conclusions and enduring quality of his research are a tribute to the breadth of his vision, the thoroughness of his methods, and the excellence of his judgment. The high standard, both in matter and appearance of the journal that he founded and edits, owes much to his expert care and sound judgment. He has an unusual expertise as a discriminating and unprejudiced critic of manuscripts submitted for publication.

As I spent considerable time in the office of Professor Tanner cataloging and labeling his library of zoological literature, I was impressed with the great number of scientists and friends who came to visit him. They all derived pleasure and inspiration from their visits.

My acquaintance with his fine family was mainly through their visits at his office. I received glimpses there of the deep, tender affection and reverent regard he holds for his wife and family.

It is always a pleasure and inspiration to visit and chat with this fine gentleman. I regard my association with him as a highly important part of my scientific education and thank him for his continual concern for my career.